

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03
NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 IO-13
DHA-02 /065 W
-----242148Z 022602 /65

R 241411Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3217
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
DIA WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
USIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE DAMASCUS 3266

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR, SY, IS
SUBJECT: SYRIAN MEDIA REACT TO LIKUD VICTORY WITH CONTINUED
RESTRAINTS

1. WHILE SYRIAN MEDIA CONTINUE TO DEVOTE CONSIDERABLE
ATTENTION TO ISRAELI ELECTIONS AND EFFORTS TO FORM NEW
GOVERNMENT, COMMENTARY BY SYRIAN STANDARDS IS RESTRAINED AND
GENERALLY CAUTIOUS.

2. MOST COMMON THEME IS THAT NO REAL CHANGE HAS OCCURRED.
LIKUD PORTRAYED AS ONLY BEING MORE CLEAR ABOUT ITS
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"AGGRESSIVE AND EXPANSIONIST AIMS" THAN WAS ALIGNMENT-LED
COALITION WHICH MEDIA CLAIMED TALKED OF PEACE BUT DID NOT
REALLY WANT TO RELINQUISH ANY TERRITORY. ORIGINALLY, SYRIAN
MEDIA STRONGLY IMPLIED THAT LEADING ISRAELI POLITICAL
PARTIES HAD CONNIVED IN ELECTION RESULTS (WITHOUT
EVER EXPLAINING HOW THIS WAS ACHIEVED) SO THAT THE
ALIGNMENT WOULD NOT HAVE TO BEAR BRUNT OF CONFRONTATION

WITH US AND TO HAVE ANOTHER WEAK COALITION GOVERNMENT AS PRETEXT FOR ISRAEL'S INABILITY TO TAKE DECISIVE DECISIONS ON MAJOR QUESTION RELATING TO PEACE. THIS HAS NOW BEGUN TO FADE FROM EDITORIAL COMMENT. BEGIN'S NAME RARELY APPEARS WITHOUT AFFIXING EPITHET OF "TERRORIST" OR "FANATIC" TO IT AND RECALLING HIS DAYS AS IRGUN LEADER.

3. ALTHOUGH SYRIA HAS CONSISTENTLY WARNED THAT MILITARY STRENGTH MUST UNDERLIE POLITICAL EFFORTS TO RECOVER ARAB RIGHTS, CALLS FOR MILITARY PREPAREDNESS AND ARAB UNITY HAVE NOW BECOME MORE FREQUENT AND CLEAR. HOWEVER, EDITORIALS AND COMMENTARIES DO NOT REPEAT NOT RULE OUT NEGOTIATIONS AS VIABLE PATH TO REGAIN OCCUPIED ARAB LANDS AND CREATE PALESTINIAN STATE. THE US IS LOOKED TO AS KEY FOR BRINGING ABOUT ISRAELI WITHDRAWALS BUT REFERENCES TO THIS IN THE MEDIA DO NOT APPEAR ANY MORE FREQUENTLY THAN BEFORE ISRAELI ELECTIONS. INDEED, SUCH STATEMENTS WERE MORE IN EVIDENCE JUST PRIOR TO AL-ASSAD'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. SEVERAL EDITORIALS HAVE EMPHASIZED THAT NO ISRAELI GOVERNMENT CAN DEFY US ME POLICY.

5. WHILE APPREHENSIONS HAVE BEEN VOICED BY SOME POLITICAL OBSERVERS THAT LIKUD'S ASCENSION TO POWER COULD DISCREDIT MODERATE ARAB LEADERSHIP, THUS FAR, SYRIAN MEDIA HAVE MADE VIRTUE OUT OF IT. OCTOBER WAR, ITS AFTER AFFECTS, AND CURRENT ARAB DIPLOMATIC STRATEGY CREDITED WITH THROWING ISRAELI POLITICS INTO DISARRAY AND LEADING TO CURRENT "CHAOS AND CONFUSION." ONE EDITORIAL, SURPRISINGLY, EVEN TOOK PHILOSOPHIC POSITION THAT ARABS SHOULD ADOPT WAIT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AND SEE ATTITUDE BECAUSE WHAT IS PROMISED IN AN ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS NOT NECESSARILY WHAT BECOMES POLICY WHEN POLITICIAN FACES RESPONSIBILITIES OF LEADERSHIP.

6. COMMENT: TO GREAT EXTENT WE BELIEVE MEDIA ON THIS ISSUE MIRROR THINKING OF NUMBER OF GENERALLY WELL-INFORMED SYRIANS BOTH IN AND OUTSIDE THE GOVERNMENT. THIS HELPS EXPLAIN IN PART WHY BEGIN'S DECLARATIONS THAT WEST BANK PART OF ERETZ ISRAEL AND ON NEED TO CREATE NEW SETTLEMENTS HAS NOT PRODUCED, TO DATE, MORE VIOLENT REACTIONS. SYRIANS SEE LITTLE DIFFERENCE AMONG ISRAELI POLITICAL PARTIES IN THEIR OVERALL STRATEGY BUT IMAGINE THEY DIFFER ONLY IN TACTICS. US ATTITUDE STILL SEEN AS THE CRUCIAL FACTOR IN PEACE TALKS.
MURPHY

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ELECTION RESULTS, NED MEDIA COMMENTS, PEACE PLANS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 24-May-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
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Litigation History:
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TAGS: PFOR, SY, IS, XF
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